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March 13, 2000

Received
MARCH 15, 2000

Ann Rice
Incoming
ACT/041/002

Dear Brad Barber,

The purpose of this letter is to keep you apprized of the status and progress of the Quitchupah Creek Road Project and the preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). This letter is being sent to all individuals who provided comments on either the Quitchupah Creek Road Environmental Assessment (EA) or EIS and to those who have asked to remain informed on this project. This letter presents a summary of public scoping conducted to date, significant issues and concerns identified, and the status of the NEPA process for the Quitchupah Creek Road EIS.

PUBLIC SCOPING

The public scoping for the Quitchupah Creek Road project was originally initiated January 15, 1999 in anticipation of the preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA). Informal meetings were held in Emery County, including a field meeting, March 30, 1999. Other meetings including the Quitchupah Grazing Association Meeting, January 27, 1999, and the Emery County Public Lands Council Meeting, June 8, 1999, were attended by agency and consultant representatives. A total of 25 comment letters were received as a result of this initial public scoping effort.

Due to the level of public concern for the proposed project, and the issues identified during that scoping process, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) determined that preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is warranted. The Notice of Intent for the Quitchupah Creek Road EIS was published in the Federal Register on July 1, 1999. The legal notice for this project was published in two local newspapers and two state-wide newspapers. Two public meetings were held in towns adjacent to the project area, and letters were sent to 160 interested people, agencies, and groups informing them of the proposed project. A total of 35 additional comments were received as a result of the EIS scoping period, equating to a total of 60 comments for the entire NEPA scoping process.

ISSUES IDENTIFIED

The scoping comments for the Quitchupah Creek Road Project were examined for common themes and the comments were combined, as appropriate, into issues. The issues were further organized by resource or issue topic. A joint BLM and USFS review of these issues has produced a list of significant issues by resource. These significant issues become the focus of the impact analysis in the EIS document. The issues from the Significant Issues Document are included with this letter.

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TASKS IN PROGRESS

As identified above, the EIS process is on-going. Tasks currently in progress are summarized below.

Based on the comments received during scoping and the development of significant issues, a separate Alternatives document is currently being prepared. The Alternatives document summarizes all project-related alternatives, including the No Action Alternative, that will be fully analyzed in the EIS. The Alternatives document is anticipated to be completed in March 2000.

Technical reports are currently being developed for the following resources; geology, soils, surface hydrology and groundwater, vegetation, wildlife, aquatic resources, special status species, archaeology and paleontology, range and livestock, land use, recreation and visual resources, noise, air quality, transportation, and socioeconomics/mine economics. These technical reports summarize all resource information known to date and the data will be used for the preparation of the EIS.

The Draft EIS is anticipated to be completed and available for public review in the March of 2001.

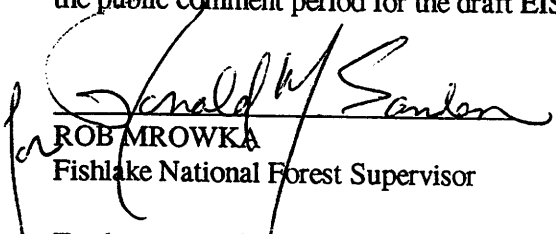
SUMMARY


Should you have any questions about the contents of this letter, the status of the Quitchupah Creek Road Project EIS, or would like your name either added or removed from the mailing list, please feel free to contact the following representatives:

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We appreciate your comments on the Quitchupah Creek Road project and look forward to your participation in the public comment period for the draft EIS document.


ROB MROWKA
Fishlake National Forest Supervisor


JERRY GOODMAN
BLM Richfield Field Office Manager

Enclosure